LITTLE BLUE BOOK NO. 671
Edited by E. Haldeman-Julius

Moral Discourses of Epictetus

Edited, with a Foreword, by
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FOREWORD

Epictetus, Greek philosopher, was born about 60 A. D.—his name is merely the Greek for *acquired*, and his real name is not known. He was a slave when a boy, and later a freedman and courtier of the notorious Nero. Lame and of poor health, he attended lectures of a Stoic philosopher, and in the year 90 he was banished with other philosophers by Domitian (51-96). So, for the rest of his life, he lived in southern Epirus, northwest of Greece. The date of his death is uncertain, some authorities extending his life into the time of Hadrian (117-138).

Like Socrates, Epictetus wrote nothing of his own. The philosophy that has come down to us is in the words of his pupil, Flavius Arrianus, and consists of the *Discourses* (in Four Books, of which the present text is an abridgment); the *Encheiridion*, or the "Handbook," which consists of aphorisms summarizing in brief and pungent paragraphs the main trends of philosophy in the *Discourses*, and which is available as Little Blue Book No. 576; and some isolated *Fragments* of which the origin is uncertain or unknown altogether.

The key to Epictetus is that he is intensely *practical*. Always a preacher of righteousness, he taught that man's will was absolutely and eternally his own, and that nothing, evil, pain, pleasure, or death, could thwart its determination. His will is man's only absolute possession—his ideas may not be his own, but the

manner in which he employs them is wholly so. "Two maxims we must ever bear in mind —that apart from the will there is nothing either good or bad, and that he must not try to anticipate or direct events, but merely accept them with intelligence." Man is the "citizen" of the universe, a part among many parts of one composite whole, and, as such, he must conduct himself as a disciple of reason. Thus he must not only look out for himself, but for the welfare of all—he is not only a "rational" but also a "social" animal. The will of nature, that is, of the Supreme Ruler—the one Law that runs through all things—is man's guiding principle, and anything conforming to that, which means everything that happens, he should accept *stoically*.

Readers interested in a more detailed exposition of Stoicism are referred to *A Guide to Stoicism*, by St. George Stock (Little Blue Book No. 347), and the *Stoic Philosophy*, by Prof. Gilbert Murray (Little Blue Book No. 210).

MORAL DISCOURSES OF EPICTETUS

(The text is based on that of T. W. Higginson, first published in 1865, which is a translation based on that of Elizabeth Carter, first published in 1758. Higginson has the advantage of more modern diction than the older translations, and hence is easier reading.)

ARRIAN[1] TO LUCIUS GELLIUS

WISHETH ALL HAPPINESS

"I neither composed the Discourses of Epictetus in such a manner as things of this nature are commonly composed, nor did I myself produce them to public view, any more than I composed them. But whatever sentiments I heard from his own mouth, the very same I endeavored to set down in the very same words, so far as possible, and to preserve as memorials for my own use, of his manner of thinking, and freedom of speech.

"These Discourses are such as one person would naturally deliver from his own thoughts, *extempore*, to another; not such as he would prepare to read by numbers afterwards. Yet, notwithstanding this, I cannot tell how, without either my consent or knowledge, they have fallen into the hands of the public. But it is of little consequence to me, if I do not appear an able writer, and of none to Epictetus, if anyone treats his Discourses with contempt; since it was very evident, even when he uttered them, that he aimed at nothing more

[1]See Foreword.

than to excite his hearers to virtue. If they produce that one effect, they have in them what, I think, philosophical discourses ought to have. And should they fail of it, let the readers however be assured, that when Epictetus himself pronounced them, his audience could not help being affected in the very manner he intended they should. If by themselves they have less efficacy, perhaps it is my fault, or perhaps it is unavoidable. *Farewell.*"

BOOK I

1. OF THE THINGS WHICH ARE AND THE THINGS WHICH ARE NOT IN OUR POWER

(Grammar tells what to write, but not when to write; music tells of tunes, but not when it is proper to play them; so what will tell these latter things?)

The Reasoning Faculty; for that alone is found to consider both itself, its powers, its value, and likewise all the rest. For what is it else that says, Gold is beautiful; for the gold itself does not speak? Evidently that faculty which judges of the appearances of things. What else distinguishes music, grammar, the other faculties, proves their uses, and shows their proper occasions? Nothing but this.

As it was fit then, this most excellent and superior faculty alone, a right use of the appearances of things, the gods have placed in our own power; but all other matters they have not placed in our power. Was it because they would not? I rather think, that if they could, they had granted us these too; but they cer-

tainly could not. For, placed upon earth, and confined to such a body, and to such companions, how was it possible that, in these respects, we should not be hindered by things outside of us?

What then is to be done? To make the best of what is in our power, and take the rest as it occurs. And how does it occur? As it pleases God.

You may fetter my leg, but not Zeus himself can get the better of my free will.

I must die: if instantly, I will die instantly; if in a short time, I will dine first; and when the hour comes, then I will die. How? As becomes one who restores what is not his own.

2. IN WHAT MANNER, UPON EVERY OCCASION, TO PRESERVE OUR CHARACTER

To a reasonable creature, that alone is insupportable which is unreasonable; but everything reasonable may be supported. In short we shall find by observation that no creature is oppressed so much by anything as by what is unreasonable; nor, on the other hand, attracted to anything so strongly as to what is reasonable.

But it happens that different things are reasonable and unreasonable, as well as good and bad, advantageous and disadvantageous, to different persons. On this account, chiefly, we stand in need of a liberal education, to teach us to adapt the preconceptions of reasonable and unreasonable to particular cases, conformably to nature. But to judge of reasonable and unreasonable, we make use not only of a due estimation of things outside of us, but

of what relates to each person's particular character. Thus, it is reasonable for one man to submit to a menial office, who considers this only, that if he does not submit to it, he shall be whipped, and lose his dinner, but that if he does, he has nothing hard or disagreeable to suffer; whereas to another it appears insupportable, not only to submit to such an office himself, but to respect anyone else who does. If you ask me, then, whether you shall do this menial office or not, I will tell you, it is a more valuable thing to get a dinner than not; and a greater disgrace to be whipped than not to be whipped;—so that, if you measure yourself by these things, go and do your office.

"Ay, but this is not suitable to my character."

It is you who are to consider that, not I; for it is you who know yourself, what value you set upon yourself, and at what rate you sell yourself; for different people sell themselves at different prices.

It was asked, How shall each of us perceive what belongs to his character? Whence, replied Epictetus, does a bull, when the lion approaches, alone recognize his own qualifications and expose himself alone for the whole herd? It is evident that with the qualifications occurs, at the same time, the consciousness of being endowed with them. And in the same manner, whoever of us hath such qualifications will not be ignorant of them. But neither is a bull, nor a gallant-spirited man, formed all at once. We are to exercise, and

qualify ourselves, and not to run rashly upon what doth not concern us.

4. OF PROGRESS

He who is entering on a state of progress, having learned from the philosophers that good should be sought and evil shunned; and having learned too that prosperity and peace are not otherwise attainable by man than in not missing what he seeks nor incurring what he shuns; such a one removes totally from himself and banishes all wayward desire, and shuns only those things over which he can have control. For if he should attempt to shun those things over which he has no control, he knows that he must sometimes incur that which he shuns, and be unhappy. Now if virtue promises happiness, prosperity, and peace, then progress in virtue is certainly progress in each of these. For to whatever point the perfection of anything absolutely brings us, progress is always an approach towards it.

How happens it, then, that when we confess virtue to be such, yet we seek and make an ostentatious show of progress in other things? What is the business of virtue? A life truly prosperous.

Seek progress where your work lies. And where doth your work lie? In learning what to seek and what to shun, that you may neither be disappointed of the one, nor incur the other; in practising how to pursue and how to avoid, that you may not be liable to fail; in practising intellectual assent and doubt, that you may not be liable to be deceived. These are the first and most necessary things. But if you merely

seek, in trembling and lamentation, to keep away all possible ills, what real progress have you made?

Where is progress, then?

If any of you, withdrawing himself from externals, turn to his own will, to train, and perfect and render it conformable to nature; noble, free, unrestrained, unhindered, faithful, humble; if he hath learned, too, that whoever desires or shuns things beyond his own power can neither be faithful nor free, but must necessarily take his chance with them, must necessarily too be subject to others, to such as can procure or prevent what he desires or shuns; if, rising in the morning, he observes and keeps to these rules; bathes regularly, eats frugally; and to every subject of action, applies the same fixed principles,—if a racer to racing, if an orator to oratory; this is he who truly makes progress; this is he who hath not labored in vain. But if he is wholly intent on reading books, and hath labored that point only, and traveled for that, I bid him go home immediately, and do his daily duties, since that which he sought is nothing.

7. OF THE USE OF THE FORMS OF RIGHT REASONING

It is not understood by most persons that the proper use of inferences and hypotheses and interrogations, and logical forms generally, has any relation to the duties of life. In every subject of action, the question is, how a wise and good man may come honestly and consistently out of it. We must admit, therefore, either that the wise man will not engage in

difficult problems; or that, if he does, he will not think it worth his care to deal with them thoroughly; or if we allow neither of these alternatives, it is necessary to confess that some examination ought to be made of those points on which the solution of these problems chiefly depends. For what is reasoning? To lay down true positions; to reject false ones; and to suspend the judgment in doubtful ones.—In reasoning the definition just given is not enough; but it is necessary that we should be able to prove and distinguish between the true, and the false, and the doubtful. This is clear.

Is it not moreover necessary that he who would behave skilfully in reasoning should both himself demonstrate whatever he asserts, and be able to comprehend the demonstrations of others; and not be deceived by such as sophisticate, as if they were demonstrating? Hence arises the use and practice of logical forms; and it appears to be indispensable.

Is it no fault to treat rashly and vainly and heedlessly the things which pass before our eyes; not to comprehend a reason, nor a demonstration, nor a sophism; nor, in short, to see what is strong in reasoning and what is weak? Is there nothing wrong in this?

12. OF CONTENTMENT

You are wretched and discontented. If you are alone, you term it a desert; and if with men, you call them cheats and robbers. You find fault too with your parents, and children, and brothers, and neighbors. Whereas you ought, if you live alone, to call that repose and freedom, and to esteem yourself as resembling the

gods; and when you are in company, not to call it a crowd, and a tumult, and a trouble, but an assembly, and a festival; and thus to take all things contentedly. What then is the punishment of those who do not so accept them? To be—as they are. Is anyone discontented with being alone? Let him remain in his desert. Discontented with his parents? Let him be a son; and let him mourn. Discontented with his children? Let him be a bad father. Shall we throw him into prison? What prison? Where he already is, for he is in a situation against his will, and wherever anyone is against his will, that is to him a prison; just as Socrates was not truly in prison, for he was willingly there.[2]

18. THAT WE OUGHT NOT TO BE ANGRY WITH THE ERRING

If what the philosophers say be true, that all men's actions proceed from one source; that, as they assent, from a persuasion that a thing is so, and dissent, from a persuasion that it is not, and suspend their judgment, from a persuasian that it is uncertain; so, likewise, they seek a thing, from a persuasion that it is for their advantage;—and it is impossible to esteem one thing advantageous, and yet desire another; to esteem one thing a duty, and yet pursue another;—why, after all, should we be angry at the multitude?

"They are thieves and robbers."

What do you mean by thieves and robbers? They are in error concerning good and evil. Ought you, then, to be angry, or rather pity

[2]See "The Trial and Death of Socrates" (Little Blue Book No. 94).

them? Do but show them their error, and you will see that they will amend their faults; but, if they do not see the error, they will rise no higher than their convictions.

22. OF GENERAL PRINCIPLES

The same general principles are common to all men, nor does one such principle contradict another. For which of us does not admit that good is advantageous and eligible, and in all cases to be pursued and followed? Who does not admit that justice is fair and becoming? Where, then, arises the dispute? In adapting these principles to particular cases. As when one cries, "Such a person has acted well; he is a gallant man"; and another, "No; he has acted like a fool." Hence arises dispute among men.

What then is it to be properly educated? To learn how to apply the principles of natural right to particular cases, and, for the rest, to distinguish that some things are in our power, while others are not. In our own power are the will, and all voluntary actions; out of our power, the body and its parts, property, parents, brothers, children, country; and, in short, all our fellow-beings. Where, then, shall we place good? In what shall we define it to consist? In things within our power.

(Property and material things are goods, some say. But if to have riches were good, then it would be right to take them away from one's neighbor. But this is not right.)

24. HOW WE OUGHT TO STRUGGLE WITH DIFFICULTIES

Difficulties are things that show what men are. For the future, in case of any difficulty,

remember, that God, like a gymnastic trainer, has pitted you against a rough antagonist. For what end? That you may be an Olympic[3] conqueror; and this cannot be without toil. No man, in my opinion, has a more profitable difficulty on his hands than you have; provided you will but use it, as an athletic champion uses his antagonist.

26. WHAT THE RULE OF LIFE IS

(The one rule of life is to live in accordance with nature.)

For, if we desire in every matter and on every occasion to conform to nature; we must, on every occasion, evidently make it our aim neither to omit anything thus conformable, nor to admit anything inconsistent. Philosophers, therefore, first exercise us in theory, which is the more easy task, and then lead us to the more difficult; for in theory, there is nothing to hinder our following what we are taught, but in life there are many things to draw us aside.

The first step towards becoming a philosopher is to be sensible in what state the ruling faculty of the mind is; for on knowing it to be weak, no person will immediately employ it in great attempts. But, for want of this, some, who can scarce digest a crumb, will yet buy and swallow whole treatises; and so they throw them up again, or cannot digest them; and then come colics, fluxes, and fevers. Such persons ought to consider what they can bear. Indeed, it is easy to convince an ignorant person, so far as

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[3]In the Olympic games: athletic contests in ancient Greece.

concerns theory; but in matters relating to life, no one offers himself to conviction, and we hate those who have convinced us. Socrates used to say that we ought not to live a life unexamined.

27. OF THE VARIED APPEARANCES OF THINGS TO THE MIND

Appearances to the mind are of four kinds. Things either are what they appear to be; or they neither are, nor appear to be; or they are, and do not appear to be; or they are not, and yet appear to be. Rightly to aim, in all these cases, is the wise man's task. Whatever unduly constrains us, to that a remedy must be applied.

28. THAT WE OUGHT NOT TO BE ANGRY WITH MANKIND

What is the cause of assent to anything? Its appearing to be true. It is not possible, therefore, to assent to what appears to be not true. Why? Because it is the very nature of the understanding to agree to truth, to be dissatisfied with falsehood, and to suspend its belief, in doubtful cases.

What is the proof of this?

Persuade yourself, if you can, that it is now night. Impossible. Dissuade yourself from the belief that it is day. Impossible. Persuade yourself that the number of the stars is even or odd. Impossible.

When anyone, then, assents to what is false, be assured that he doth not willfully assent to it, as false; for, as Plato affirms, the soul is unwillingly deprived of truth; but what is false appears to him to be true. Well, then; have we,

in actions, anything corresponding to this distinction between true and false?

Right and wrong; advantageous and disadvantageous; desirable and undesirable; and the like.

A person then cannot think a thing truly advantageous to him, and not choose it? He cannot.

(Then why be angry with those who unhappily are deceived, and take the false for the true?) Why do you not rather, as we pity the blind and lame, so likewise pity those who are blinded and lamed in their superior faculties? Whoever, therefore, duly remembers that the appearance of things to the mind is the standard of every action to man; that this is either right or wrong, and, if right, he is without fault, if wrong, he himself suffers punishment; for that one man cannot be the person deceived, and another the only sufferer;—such a person will not be outrageous and angry at anyone; will not revile, or reproach, or hate, or quarrel with anyone.

29. OF COURAGE

The essence of good and evil is a certain disposition of the will.

What are things outward then? Materials on which the will may act, in attaining its own good or evil.

How, then, will it attain good?

If it be not dazzled by its own materials; for right principles concerning these materials keep the will in a good state; but perverse and distorted principles, in a bad one. This law hath God ordained, who says, "If you wish for good,

receive it from yourself." You say, No; but from another. "Nay; but from yourself."

Accordingly, when a tyrant threatens, and sends for me, I say, Against what is your threatening pointed? If he says, "I will chain you," I answer, It is my hands and feet that you threaten. If he says, "I will cut off your head," I answer, It is my head that you threaten. If he says, "I will throw you into prison," I answer, It is the whole of this paltry body that you threaten; and if he threatens banishment, just the same.

"Does not he threaten *you*, then?"

If I am persuaded that these things are nothing to me, he does not; but, if I fear any of them, it is me that he threatens. Who is it, after all, that I fear? The master of what? Of things in my own power? Of these no one is the master. Of things not in my power? And what are these to me?

"What, then! Do you philosophers teach us a contempt of kings?"

By no means. Which of us teaches anyone to contend with them about things of which they have the command? Take my body; take my possessions; take my reputation; take away even my friends. If I persuade anyone to claim these things as his own, you may justly accuse me. "Ay; but I would command your principles, too." And who hath given you that power? How can you conquer the principle of another? "By applying terror, I will conquer it." Do you not see, that what conquers itself, is not conquered by another? And nothing but itself can conquer the will. Hence, too, the most excellent and

equitable law of God; that the better should always prevail over the worse. Ten are better than one.

"For what purpose?"

For chaining, killing, dragging where they please; for taking away an estate. Thus ten conquer one, in the cases wherein they are better.

"In what, then, are they worse?"

When the one has right principles, and the others have not. For can they conquer in this case? How should they? If we were weighed in a scale, must not the heavier outweigh?

"How then came Socrates to suffer such things from the Athenians?"

O foolish man! what mean you by Socrates? Express the fact as it is. Are you surprised that the mere body of Socrates should be carried away, and dragged to prison, by such as were stronger; that it should be poisoned by hemlock and die? Do these things appear wonderful to you? These things unjust? Is it for such things as these that you accuse God? Had Socrates, then, no compensation for them? In what, then, to him, did the essence of good consist? Whom shall we regard; you, or him? And what says he? "Anytus and Melitus may indeed kill; but hurt me they cannot." And again: "If it so pleases God, so let it be."

But show me that he who has the worse principles can get the advantage over him who has the better. You never will show it, nor anything like it; for the Law of Nature and of God is this,—let the better always prevail over the worse.

BOOK II

1. THAT COURAGE IS NOT INCONSISTENT WITH CAUTION

There is an assertion of the philosophers which may perhaps appear a paradox to many; yet let us fairly examine whether it be true:—that it is possible in all things to act at once with caution and courage. For caution seems, in some measure, contrary to courage; and contraries are by no means consistent. The appearance of a paradox in the present case seems to me to arise as follows. If indeed we assert that courage and caution are to be used in the same instances, we might justly be accused of uniting contradictions; but, in the way that we affirm it, where is the absurdity? For, if what has been so often said, and so often demonstrated, be certain, that the essence of good and evil consists in the use of things as they appear, and that things inevitable are not to be classed either as good or evil, what paradox do the philosophers assert, if they say, "Where events are inevitable, meet them with courage, but otherwise, with caution?" For in these last cases only, if evil lies in a perverted will, is caution to be used. And if things inevitable and uncontrollable are nothing to us, in these we are to make use of courage. Thus we shall be at once cautious and courageous; and, indeed, courageous on account of this very caution; for by using caution, with regard to things really evil, we shall gain courage, with regard to what are not so.

Courage, then, ought to be opposed to death, and caution to the *fear* of death; whereas, we,

on the contrary, oppose to death, flight; and to these our false convictions concerning it, recklessness, and desperation, and assumed indifference.

This weak flesh is sometimes affected by harsh, sometimes by smooth impressions. If suffering be beyond endurance, the door is open; till then, bear it. It is fit that the final door should be open against all accidents, since thus we escape all trouble.

What, then, is the fruit of these principles? What it ought to be; the most noble, and the most suitable to the wise,—tranquillity, security, freedom. For in this case, we are not to give credit to the many, who say that none ought to be educated but the free; but rather to the philosophers, who say that the wise alone are free.

6. OF CIRCUMSTANCES

A process of reasoning may be an indifferent thing; but our judgment concerning it is not indifferent; for it is either knowledge, or opinion, or mistake. So the events of life occur indifferently, but the use of it is not indifferent. When you are told, therefore, that these things are indifferent, do not, on that account, ever be careless; nor yet, when you are governed by prudence, be abject, and dazzled by externals. It is good to know your own qualifications and powers; that, where you are not qualified, you may be quiet, and not angry that others have there the advantage of you. For you too will think it reasonable, that you should have the advantage in the art of reasoning; and, if others should be angry at it, you will tell them,

by way of consolation, "This I have learned, and you have not." Thus, too, wherever practice is necessary, do not pretend to what can only be attained by practice; but leave the matter to those who are practised, and do you be contented in your own security.

Not one of us, even when necessity calls, is ready and willing to obey it; but we weep and groan over painful events, calling them our "circumstances." What circumstances, man? For if you call what surrounds you circumstances, everything is a circumstance; but if by this you mean hardships, where is the hardship, that whatever is born must die? The instrument is either a sword, or a wheel, or the sea, or a tyrant. And what does it signify to you by what way you descend to Hades? All are equal; but, if you would hear the truth, the shortest is that by which a tyrant sends you. No tyrant was ever six months in cutting any man's throat; but a fever often takes a year. All these things are mere sound, and the rumor of empty names.

Only remember the distinction between what is your own, and what is not your own, and you will never claim what belongs to others. Judicial bench or dungeon, each is but a place, one high, the other low; but your will is equal to either condition, and if you have a mind to keep it so, it may be so kept.

8. WHEREIN CONSISTS THE ESSENCE OF GOOD

God is beneficial. Good is also beneficial. It should seem, then, that where the essence of God is, there too is the essence of good. What then is the essence of God? Flesh? By no

means. An estate? Fame? By no means. Intelligence? Knowledge? Right reason? Certainly. Here, then, without more ado, seek the essence of good. For do you seek that quality in a plant? No. Or in a brute? No. If, then, you seek it only in a rational subject, why do you seek it anywhere but in what distinguishes that from things irrational? Plants make no voluntary use of things; and therefore you do not apply the term of *good* to them.—*Good*, then, implies such use. If so, you may say that good, and happiness, and unhappiness, belong to mere animals. But this you do not say, and you are right; for, how much soever they have the use of things, they have not the intelligent use; and with good reason, for they are made to be subservient to others, and not of primary importance. Why was an ass made? Was it as being of primary importance? No; but because we had need of a back, able to carry burdens. We had need too that he should be capable of locomotion; therefore he had the voluntary use of things added; otherwise he could not have moved. But here his endowments end; for, if an understanding of that use had been added, he would not, in reason, have been subject to us, nor have done us these services; but would have been like and equal to ourselves. Why will you not, therefore, seek the essence of good in that without which you cannot say that there is good in anything?

9. WHAT THE NATURE OF MAN IMPLIES

It were no slight attainment could we merely fulfil what the nature of man implies. For what is man? A rational and mortal being.

Well; from what are we distinguished by reason? From wild beasts. From what else? From sheep, and the like.

Take care, then, to do nothing like a wild beast; otherwise you have destroyed the man; you have not fulfilled what your nature promises. Take care too to do nothing like cattle; for thus likewise the man is destroyed.

In what do we act like cattle? When we act gluttonously, lewdly, rashly, sordidly, inconsiderately, into what are we sunk? Into cattle. What have we destroyed? The rational being.

When we behave contentiously, injuriously, passionately, and violently, into what have we sunk? Into wild beasts. And further, some of us are wild beasts of a larger size; others, little mischievous vermin; such as suggest the proverb, Let me rather be eaten by a lion.

By all these means, that is destroyed which the nature of man implies.

10. HOW WE MAY INFER THE DUTIES OF LIFE FROM ITS NOMINAL FUNCTIONS

Consider who you are. In the first place, a man; that is, one who recognizes nothing superior to the faculty of free will, but all things as subject to this; and this itself as not to be enslaved or subjected to anything. Consider, then, from what you are distinguished by reason. You are distinguished from wild beasts: you are distinguished from cattle. Besides, you are a citizen of the universe, and a part of it; not a subordinate, but a principal part. You are capable of comprehending the Divine economy; and of considering the connections of things. What then does the character of a

citizen imply? To hold no private interest; to deliberate of nothing as a separate individual, but rather like the hand or the foot, which, if they had reason, and comprehended the constitution of nature, would never pursue, or desire, but with a reference to the whole. Hence the philosophers rightly say that, if it were possible for a wise and good man to foresee what was to happen, he might co-operate in bringing on himself sickness, and death, and mutilation, being sensible that these things are appointed in the order of the universe; and that the whole is superior to a part, and the city to the citizen. But, since we do not foreknow what is to happen, it becomes our duty to hold to what is more agreeable to our choice, for this too is a part of our birthright.

(Duties are implied by the name of what you are: if you are a son, act like a dutiful son; if a brother, like an affectionate brother; if a senator, like a responsible public official.)

If, instead of a man, a gentle, social creature, you have become a wild beast, mischievous, insidious, biting; have you lost nothing? Is it only the loss of money which is reckoned damage; and is there no other thing, the loss of which damages a man? If you were to part with your skill in grammar, or in music, would you think the loss of these a damage; and yet, if you part with honor, decency, and gentleness, do you think that no matter? Yet the first may be lost by some cause external and inevitable; but the last only by your own fault. There is no shame in not having, or in losing the one; but either not to have, or to lose the

other, is equally shameful, and reproachful, and unhappy. What does the debauchee lose? Manhood. What does he lose who made him such? Many things, but manhood also. What does an angry person lose? A coward? Each loses his portion. No one is wicked without some loss or damage.

(When seeking revenge, remember this, that a man who hurts you hurts himself, and say to yourself: "Since he has hurt himself by injuring me, shall I not hurt myself by injuring him?")

11. THE BEGINNING OF PHILOSOPHY

The beginning of philosophy is this: the being sensible of the disagreement of men with each other; an inquiry into the cause of this disagreement; and a disapprobation, and distrust of what merely seems; a careful examination into what seems, whether it seem rightly; and the discovery of some rule which shall serve like a balance, for the determination of weights; like a square, for distinguishing straight and crooked. This is the beginning of philosophy.

15. CONCERNING THOSE WHO OBSTINATELY PERSIST IN WHAT THEY HAVE DETERMINED

Some, when they hear such discourses as these, "That we ought to be steadfast; that the will is by nature free and unconstrained; and that all else is liable to restraint, compulsion, slavery, and tyranny," imagine that they must remain immutably fixed to everything which they have determined. But it is first necessary that the determination should be a wise one.

Suppose, by any means, it should ever come into your head to kill me; must you keep such a determination?

18. HOW THE SEMBLANCE OF THINGS ARE TO BE COMBATED

Every habit and faculty is preserved and increased by correspondent actions; as the habit of walking, by walking; of running, by running. If you would be a reader, read; if a writer, write. But if you do not read for a month together, but do something else, you will see what will be the consequence. So, after sitting still for ten days, get up and attempt to take a long walk, and you will find how your legs are weakened. Upon the whole, then, whatever you would make habitual, practice it; and, if you would not make a thing habitual, do not practice it, but habituate yourself to something else.

It is the same with regard to the operations of the soul. Whenever you are angry, be assured that it is not only a present evil, but that you have increased a habit, and added fuel to a fire. When you are overcome by the seductions of a woman, do not consider it as a single defeat alone, but that you have fed, that you have increased, your dissoluteness. For it is impossible, but that habits and faculties must either be first produced, or strengthened and increased, by corresponding actions. Hence the philosophers derive the growth of all maladies.

If you would not be of an angry temper, then, do not feed the habit. Give it nothing to help its increase. Be quiet at first, and reckon the days in which you have not been angry. I

used to be angry every day; then every third and fourth day; and if you miss it so long as thirty days, offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving to God. For habit is first weakened, and then entirely destroyed.

By placing a good example before you, you will conquer any alluring semblance, and not be drawn away by it. But in the first place, be not hurried away by excitement; but say, Semblance, wait for me a little. Let me see what you are, and what you represent. Let me try you. Then, afterwards, do not suffer it to go on drawing gay pictures of what will follow; if you do, it will lead you wherever it pleases. But rather oppose to it some good and noble semblance, and banish this base one. If you are habituated to this kind of exercise, you will see what shoulders, what nerves, what sinews, you will have. But now it is mere trifling talk, and nothing more. He is the true athlete, who trains himself against such semblances as these. The combat is great, the achievement divine; for empire, for freedom, for prosperity, for tranquillity. Remember God. Invoke him for your aid and protector; as sailors do Castor and Pollux, in a storm. For what storm is greater than that which arises from these perilous semblances, contending to overset our reason? Indeed, what is the storm itself, but a semblance? For do but take away the fear of death, and let there be as many thunders and lightnings as you please, you will find that to the reason all is serenity and calm; but if you are once defeated, and say you will get the victory another time, and then the same thing over again; as-

sure yourself that you will at last be reduced to so weak and wretched a condition, that you will not so much as know when you do amiss; but you will even begin to make defenses for your behavior, and thus verify the saying of Hesiod: "With constant ills, the dilatory strive."

21. OF INCONSISTENCY

There are some things which men confess with ease; and others with difficulty. No one, for instance, will confess himself a fool, or a blockhead; but, on the contrary, you will hear everyone say, "I wish my fortune were in proportion to my abilities." But they easily confess themselves fearful, and say, "I am somewhat timorous, I confess; but in other respects you will not find me a fool." No one will easily confess himself intemperate in his desires; upon no account dishonest, nor indeed very envious, or meddling; but many confess themselves to have the weakness of being compassionate. What is the reason of all this? The principal reason is an inconsistency and confusion in what relates to good and evil. But different people have different motives, and, in general, whatever they imagine to be base, they do not absolutely confess. Fear and compassion they imagine to belong to a well-meaning disposition; but stupidity, to a slave. Offenses against society they do not own; but, in most faults, they are brought to a confession, chiefly from imagining that there is something involuntary in them; as in fear and compassion. And, though a person should in some measure confess himself intemperate in his desires, he

accuses his passion, and expects forgiveness, as for an involuntary fault. But dishonesty is not imagined to be, by any means, involuntary. In jealousy, too, there is something they suppose involuntary; and this, likewise, in some degree, they confess.

Conversing therefore with such men, thus confused, thus ignorant what they say, and what are or are not their ills, whence they have them, and how they may be delivered from them; it is worthwhile, I think, to ask oneself continually, "Am I too one of these? What do I imagine myself to be? How do I conduct myself? As a prudent, as a temperate man? Do I, too, ever talk at this rate; that I am sufficiently instructed for what may happen? Have I that persuasion, that I know nothing, which becomes one who knows nothing? Do I go to a master, as to an oracle, prepared to obey; or do I also, like a mere driveller, enter the school, only to learn and understand books which I did not understand before; or, perhaps, to explain them to others?"

22. OF FRIENDSHIP

To whatever objects a person devotes his attention, these objects he probably loves. Do men ever devote their attention, then, to what they regard as evils? By no means. Or even to things indifferent? No, nor this. It remains, then, that good must be the sole object of their attention; and, if of their attention, of their love too. Whoever, therefore, understands good, is capable likewise of love; and he who cannot distinguish good from evil, and things indifferent from both, how is it possible that

he can love? The wise person alone, then, is capable of loving.

No living being is held by anything so strongly as by its own needs. Whatever therefore appears a hindrance to these, be it brother, or father, or child, or mistress, or friend, is hated, abhorred, execrated; for by nature it loves nothing like its own needs. This motive is father, and brother, and family, and country, and God. Whenever, therefore, the gods seem to hinder this, we vilify even them, and throw down their statues, and burn their temples.

When therefore anyone identifies his interest with those of sanctity, virtue, country, parents, and friends, all these are secured; but whenever he places his interest in anything else than friends, country, family, and justice, then these all give way, borne down by the weight of self-interest. For wherever *I* and *mine* are placed, thither must every living being gravitate. If in body, that will sway us; if in our own will, that; if in externals, these. If, therefore, I rest my personality in the will, then only shall I be a friend, a son, or a father, such as I ought. For, in that case, it will be for my interest to preserve the faithful, the modest, the patient, the abstinent, the beneficent character; to keep the relations of life inviolate. But, if I place my personality in one thing, and virtue in another, the doctrine of Epicurus will stand its ground, that virtue is nothing, or mere opinion.

And the governing faculty of a bad man is faithless, unsettled, undiscriminating, successively vanquished by different semblances. In-

quire, not whether two men were born of the same parents, and brought up together, and under the same preceptor; but this thing only, in what they place their interest; in externals, or in their own wills. If in externals, you can no more pronounce them friends, than you can call them faithful, or constant, or brave, or free; nay, nor even truly men, if you are wise. For it is no principle of humanity that makes them bite and vilify each other, and take possession of public assemblies, as wild beasts do of solitudes and mountains; and convert courts of justice into dens of robbers; that prompts them to be intemperate, adulterers, seducers; or leads them into other offenses that men commit against each other,—all from that one single error, by which they risk themselves and their own concerns on things uncontrollable by will.

But if you hear that these men in reality suppose good to be placed only in the will, and in a right use of things as they appear; no longer take the trouble to inquire whether they are father and son, or old companions and acquaintances; but boldly pronounce that they are friends, and also that they are faithful and just. For where else can friendship be met, but joined with fidelity and modesty, and the intercommunication of virtue alone?

Whoever, therefore, among you studies either to be or to gain a friend, let him cut up all false convictions by the root, hate them, drive them utterly out of his soul. Thus, in the first place, he will be secure from inward reproaches and contests; from vacillation and self-torment.

Then with respect to others; to every like-minded person he will be without disguise; to such as are unlike he will be patient, mild, gentle, and ready to forgive them, as failing in points of the greatest importance; but severe to none, being fully convinced of Plato's doctrine that the soul is never willingly deprived of truth. Without all this, you may, in many respects, live as friends do; and drink, and lodge, and travel together, and even be born of the same parents; and so many serpents too; but neither they nor you can ever be really friends, while your accustomed principles remain brutal and execrable.

(In the remaining chapters of Book II, Epictetus emphasizes once more the dominating faculty of the Will, bringing out the same points that he discussed in the opening chapter of the discourses: the eyes can see, but how they shall interpret what they see is determined only by the will; the ears hear, but how they shall make use of what they hear depends on the Will; and so forth. It is also demonstrated that the philosopher must not only have the art of speaking well, but his listener must possess the art of hearing well. Thus, though an artist must have talent to make a statue or a painting, there is an art also required for viewing the statue and for appreciating the painting. Incidentally, a very interesting argument is set forth for the necessity of logic, separated as Chapter 25. It follows.)

When one of the company said to him, "Convince me that logic is necessary?" he replied,

Would you have me demonstrate it to you? "Yes." Then I must use a demonstrative form of argument? "Granted." How will you know, then, whether I argue falsely? On this, the man being silent, You see, says he, even by your own confession logic is necessary; since without it, you cannot even learn whether it be necessary or not.

BOOK III

3. THE CHIEF CONCERN OF A GOOD MAN

The chief concern of a wise and good man is his own Reason. The body is the concern of a physician, and of a gymnastic trainer; and the fields, of the husbandman. The business of a wise and good man is to use the phenomena of existence conformably to Nature. Now, every soul, as it is naturally formed for an assent to truth, a dissent from falsehood, and a suspense of judgment with regard to things uncertain, so it is moved by a desire of good, an aversion from evil, and an indifference to what is neither good nor evil. For, as a money-changer, or a gardener, is not at liberty to reject Cæsar's coin; but when once it is shown, is obliged, whether he will or not, to deliver his wares in exchange for it; so is it with the soul. Apparent good at first sight attracts, and evil repels. Nor will the soul any more reject an evident appearance of good, than Cæsar's coin.

Hence depends every movement, both of God and man; and hence good is preferred to every obligation, however near. My connection is not with my father; but with good.—Are you

so hard-hearted?—Such is my nature, and such is the coin which God hath given me. If therefore good is interpreted to be anything but what is fair and just, away go father, and brother, and country, and everything. What! Shall I overlook my own good, and give it up to you? For what? "I am your father." But not my good. "I am your brother." But not my good. But, if we place it in a rightly trained Will, good must then consist in an observance of the several relations of life; and then, he who gives up mere externals, acquires good. Your father deprives you of your money; but he does not hurt you. He will possess more land than you, as much more as he pleases; but will he possess more honor? More fidelity? More affection? Who can deprive you of this possession? Not even Zeus; for he did not will it so, since he has put this good into my own power, and given it me, like his own, uncompelled, unrestrained, and unhindered. But when anyone deals in coin different from this, then whoever shows it to him may have whatever is sold for it in return.

In this manner ought everyone chiefly to train himself. When you go out in the morning, examine whomsoever you see, or hear; and answer as if to a question. What have you seen? A handsome person? Apply the rule. Is this a thing controllable by Will, or uncontrollable? Uncontrollable. Then discard it. What have you seen? One in agony for the death of a child. Apply the rule. Death is inevitable. Banish this despair then. Has a consul met you? Apply the rule. What kind

of thing is the consular office? Controllable by Will, or uncontrollable? Uncontrollable. Throw aside this too. It will not pass. Cast it away. It is nothing to you.

If we acted thus, and practised in this manner from morning till night, by Heaven, something would be done. Whereas now, on the contrary, we are allured by every semblance, half asleep; and, if we are ever awake, it is only a little in the school; but as soon as we go out, if we meet anyone grieving, we say, "He is undone." If a consul, "How happy is he!" If an exile, "How miserable." If a poor man, "How wretched; he has nothing to eat!"

These miserable prejudices then are to be lopped off; and here is our whole strength to be applied. For what is weeping and groaning? Prejudice. What is misfortune? Prejudice. What is sedition, discord, complaint, accusation, impiety, levity? All these are prejudices, and nothing more; and prejudices concerning things uncontrollable by Will, as if they could be either good or evil. Let anyone transfer these convictions to things controllable by Will, and I will engage that he will preserve his constancy, whatever be the state of things about him.

The soul is like a vase filled with water; while the semblances of things fall like rays upon its surface. If the water is moved, the ray will seem to be moved likewise, though it is in reality without motion. When, therefore, anyone is seized with a giddiness in his head, it is not the arts and virtues that are bewildered, but the mind in which they lie; when

this recovers its composure, so will they likewise.

8. HOW WE ARE TO EXERCISE OURSELVES AGAINST THE SEMBLANCES OF THINGS

In the same manner as we exercise ourselves against sophistical questions, we should exercise ourselves likewise in relation to such semblances as every day occur; for these, too, offer questions to us. Such a one's son is dead. What think you of it? Answer: it is a thing inevitable, and therefore not an evil. Such a one is disinherited by his father. What think you of it? It is inevitable, and so not an evil. Cæsar has condemned him. This is inevitable, and so not an evil. He has been afflicted by it. This is controllable by Will; it is an evil. He has supported it bravely. This is within the control of Will; it is a good.

If we train ourselves in this manner we shall make improvement; for we shall never assent to anything but what the semblance itself includes. A son is dead. What then? A son is dead. Nothing more? Nothing. A ship is lost. What then? A ship is lost. He is carried to prison. What then? He is carried to prison. That he is *unhappy* is an addition that everyone must make for himself. "But Zeus does not order these things rightly." Why so? Because he has made you to be patient? Because he has made you to be brave? Because he has made them to be no evils? Because it is permitted you, while you suffer them, to be happy? Because he has opened you the door whenever they do not suit you? Go out, man, and do not complain!

10. IN WHAT MANNER WE OUGHT TO BEAR SICKNESS

We should have all our principles ready for use on every occasion. At dinner, such as relate to dinner; in the bath, such as relate to the bath; in the bed, such as relate to the bed.

Again; in a fever, we should have such principles ready as relate to a fever; and not, as soon as we are taken ill, forget all. Provided I do but act like a philosopher, let what will happen. Some way or other depart I must from this frail body, whether a fever comes or not. What is it to be a philosopher? Is it not to be prepared against events? Do you not comprehend that you then say, in effect, "If I am but prepared to bear all events with calmness, let what will happen;" otherwise, you are like an athlete, who, after receiving a blow, should quit the combat. In that case, indeed, you might leave off without a penalty. But what shall we get by leaving off philosophy?

Now is your time for a fever. Bear it well. For thirst; bear it well. For hunger; bear it well. Is it not in your power? Who shall restrain you? A physician may restrain you from drinking; but he cannot restrain you from bearing your thirst well. He may restrain you from eating; but he cannot restrain you from bearing hunger well.

What is it to bear a fever well? Not to blame either God or man; not to be afflicted at what happens; to wait death in a right and becoming manner; and to do what is to be done. When the physician enters, not to dread what

he may say; nor, if he should tell you that you are doing well, to be too much rejoiced; for what good has he told you? When you were in health, what good did it do you? Not to be dejected when he tells you that you are very ill; for what is it to be very ill? To be near the separation of soul and body. What harm is there in this, then? If you are not near it now, will you not be near it hereafter? What, will the world be quite overturned when you die? Why, then, do you flatter your physician? Why do you say, "If you please, sir, I shall do well?" Why do you furnish an occasion to his pride? Why do you not treat a physician with regard to an insignificant body, —which is not yours, but by nature mortal,— as you do a shoemaker about your foot, or a carpenter about your house? It is the season for these things, to one in a fever. If he fulfills these, he has what belongs to him. For it is not the business of a philosopher to take care of these mere externals, of his wine, his oil, or his body; but of his Reason. And how with regard to externals? Not to behave inconsiderately about them.

What occasion is there, then, for fear? What occasion for anger, for desire, about things that belong to others, or are of no value? For two rules we should always have ready,—*that there is nothing good or evil in the Will;* and *that we are not to lead events, but to follow them.* "My brother ought not to have treated me so." Very true; but he must see to that. However he treats me, I am to act rightly with regard to him; for the one is my own concern,

the other is not; the one cannot be restrained, the other may.

14. MISCELLANEOUS

Two things must be rooted out of men, conceit and diffidence. Conceit lies in thinking that you want nothing; and diffidence in supposing it impossible that under such adverse circumstances you should ever succeed. Now conceit is removed by confutation; and of this Socrates set the example. And consider and ascertain that the undertaking is not impracticable. The inquiry itself will do you no harm; and it is almost being a philosopher to inquire how it is possible to employ our desire and aversion without hindrance.

"I am better than you; for my father has been consul."—"I have been a tribune," says another, "and you not." If we were horses, would you say, "My father was swifter than yours? I have abundance of oats and hay and fine trappings?" What now, if, while you were saying this, I should answer: "Be it so. Let us run a race then." Is there nothing in man analogous to a race in horses, by which it may be decided which is better or worse? Is there not honor, fidelity, justice? Show yourself the better in these, that you may be the better as a man. But if you only tell me that you can kick violently, I will tell you again that you value yourself on what is the property of an ass.

16. THAT CAUTION SHOULD BE USED AS TO PERSONAL FAMILIARITY

He who frequently mingles with others, either in conversation or at entertainments, or

in any familiar way of living, must necessarily either become like his companions, or bring them over to his own way. For, if a dead coal be applied to a live one, either the first will quench the last, or the last kindle the first. Since, then, the danger is so great, caution must be used in entering into these familiarities with the crowd; remembering that it is impossible to touch a chimney-sweeper without being partaker of his soot.

19. THE PHILOSOPHER AND THE CROWD

The first difference between one of the crowd and a philosopher is this: the one says, "I am undone on account of my child, my brother, my father"; but the other, if ever he be obliged to say, "I am undone!" reflects, and adds, "on account of myself." For the Will cannot be restrained or hurt by anything to which the Will does not extend, but only by itself. If, therefore, we always would incline this way, and, whenever we are unsuccessful, would lay the fault on ourselves, and remember that there is no cause of perturbation and inconstancy but wrong principles, I pledge myself to you that we should make some proficiency.

20. THAT SOME ADVANTAGE MAY BE GAINED FROM EVERY OUTWARD CIRCUMSTANCE

In considering sensible phenomena, almost all persons admit good and evil to lie in ourselves and not in externals. No one says it is good to be day; evil to be night; and the greatest evil that three should be four; but what? That knowledge is good and error evil. Even in connection with falsehood itself there

may be one good thing; the knowledge that it is falsehood. Thus, then, should it be in life also. "Health is a good; sickness an evil." No, sir. But what? A right use of health is a good; a wrong one, an evil. So that, in truth, it is possible to be a gainer even by sickness. And is it not possible by death too? By mutilation?

Cease to make yourselves slaves; first, of things, and, then, upon their account, of the men who have the power either to bestow or to take them away. Is there any advantage, then, to be gained from these men? From all; even from a reviler. What advantage does a wrestler gain from him with whom he exercises himself before the combat? The greatest. And just in the same manner I exercise myself with this man. He exercises me in patience, in gentleness, in meekness. I am to suppose, then, that I gain an advantage from him who exercises my neck, and puts my back and shoulders in order; so that the trainer may well bid me grapple him, with both hands, and the heavier he is the better for me; and yet it is no advantage to me when I am exercised in gentleness of temper! This is not to know how to gain an advantage from men.

24. THAT WE OUGHT NOT TO BE AFFECTED BY THINGS NOT IN OUR OWN POWER.

Let not another's disobedience to Nature become an ill to you; for you were not born to be depressed and unhappy with others, but to be happy with them. And if any is unhappy, remember that he is so for himself; for God made all men to enjoy felicity and peace. He

hath furnished all with means for this purpose; having given them some things for their own; others, not for their own. Whatever is subject to restraint, compulsion, or deprivation is not their own; whatever is not subject to restraint is their own. And the essence of good and evil He has placed in things which are our own; as it became Him who provides for, and protects us, with paternal care.

"But I have parted with such a one, and he is therefore in grief."

And why did he esteem what belonged to another his own? Why did he not consider, while he was happy in seeing you, that you are mortal, that you are liable to change your abode? Therefore, he bears the punishment of his own folly. But to what purpose, or for what cause, do you too suffer depression of spirits? Have *you* not studied these things? Like trifling, silly women, have you regarded the things you took delight in, the places, the persons, the conversations, as if they were to last forever; and do you now sit crying, because you do not see the same people, nor live in the same place? Indeed, you deserve to be so overcome, and thus to become more wretched than ravens or crows, which, without groaning or longing for their former state, can fly where they will, build their nests in another place, and cross the seas.

"Ay, but this happens from their want of reason."

Was reason then given to us by the gods for the purpose of unhappiness and misery, to make us live wretched and lamenting? O, by

all means, let everyone be deathless! Let nobody go from home! Let us never go from home ourselves, but remain rooted to a spot, like plants! And if any of our acquaintance should quit his abode, let us sit and cry; and when he comes back, let us dance and clap our hands like children. Shall we never wean ourselves, and remember what we have heard from the philosophers,—unless we have heard them only as juggling enchanters;—that the universe is one great city, and the substance one of which it is formed; that there must necessarily be a certain rotation of things; that some must give way to others, some be dissolved, and others rise in their stead; some remain in the same situation, and others be moved; but that all is full of beloved ones, first of the gods, and then of men, by nature endeared to each other; that some must be separated, others live together, rejoicing in the present and not grieving for the absent: and that man, besides a natural greatness of mind and contempt of things independent of his own will, is likewise formed not to be rooted to the earth, but to go at different times to different places; sometimes on urgent occasions, and sometimes merely for the sake of observation.

"But my mother grieves when she does not see me."

And why has not she learned these doctrines? I do not say that care ought to be taken that she may not lament; but that we are not to insist absolutely upon what is not in our own power. Now the grief of another

is not in my power; but my own grief is. I will therefore absolutely suppress my own, for that is in my power; and I will endeavor to suppress another's grief so far as I am able; but I will not insist upon it absolutely, otherwise I shall fight against God; I shall resist Zeus, and oppose him in the administration of the universe. And not only my children's children will bear the punishment of this disobedience and fighting against God, but I myself too; starting, and full of perturbation, both in the daytime and in my nightly dreams; trembling at every message, and having my peace dependent on intelligence from others. "Somebody is come from Rome." "I trust no harm has happened." Why, what harm can happen to you where you are not? "From Greece."—"No harm, I hope?" Why, at this rate, every place may be the cause of misfortune for you. Is it not enough for you to be unfortunate where you are, but it must happen beyond sea, too, and by letters? Such is the security of your condition!

"But what if my friends there should be dead?"

What, indeed, but that those are dead who were born to die? Do you at once wish to grow old, and yet not see the death of anyone you love? Do you not know that, in a long course of time, many and various events must necessarily happen? That a fever must get the better of one; a highwayman, of another; a tyrant, of a third? For such is the world we live in; such they who live in it with us. Heats and colds, improper diet, journeys, voyages, winds, and

various accidents destroy some, banish others; destine one to an embassy, another to a camp. And now, pray, will you sit in consternation about all these things; lamenting, disappointed, wretched, dependent on another; and not on one or two only, but ten thousand times ten thousand!

Everyone's life is a warfare, and that long and various. You must observe the duty of a soldier, and perform everything at the nod of your General, and even, if possible, divine what he would have done. You are placed in an extensive command, and not in a mean post; your life is a perpetual magistracy.

Did you never visit anyone at Athens at his own house?

"Yes; whomsoever I pleased."

Why; now you are here, be willing to visit this person, and you will still see whom you please; only let it be without meanness, without undue desire or aversion, and your affairs will go well; but their going well, or not, does not consist in going to the house and standing at the door, or the contrary; but lies within, in your own principles; when you have acquired a contempt for things uncontrollable by Will, and esteem none of them your own, but hold that what belongs to you is only to judge and think, to exert rightly your aims, your desires, and aversions. What further room is there after this for flattery, for meanness? Why do you still long for the quiet you elsewhere enjoyed; for places familiar to you? Stay a little, and these will become familiar to you in their turn;

and, then, if you are so mean-spirited, you may weep and lament again on leaving these.

"How, then, am I to preserve an affectionate disposition?"

As becomes a noble-spirited and happy person. For reason will never tell you to be dejected and broken-hearted; or to depend on another; or to reproach either God or man. Be affectionate in such a manner as to observe all this. But if, from affection, as you call it, you are to be a slave and miserable, it is not worth your while to be affectionate. And what restrains you from loving anyone as a mortal,—as a person who may be obliged to quit you? (Are you going to grieve for the loss of one to whom you gave affection? If you are, consider this.) If you ever get any new acquaintance and friends, you will find fresh causes for groaning; and, in like manner, if you attach yourself to another country. To what purpose, therefore, do you live? To heap sorrow upon sorrow, to make you wretched? And then you tell me this is affection. What affection, man? If it be good, it cannot be the cause of any ill; if ill, I will have nothing to do with it. I was born for my own good, not ill.

"What, then, is the proper training for these cases?"

First, the highest and principal means, and as obvious as if at your very door, is this,—that when you attach yourself to anything, it may not be as to a secure possession.

"How then?"

As to something brittle as glass or earthenware; that, when it happens to be broken, you

may not lose your self-command. So here, too; when you embrace your child, or your brother, or your friend, never yield yourself wholly to the fair semblance, nor let the passion pass into excess; but curb it, restrain it,—like those who stand behind triumphant victors, and remind them that they are men. Do you likewise remind yourself that you love what is mortal; that you love what is not your own. It is allowed you for the present, not irrevocably, nor forever; but as a fig, or a bunch of grapes, in the appointed season. If you long for these in winter you are foolish. So, if you long for your son, or your friend, when you cannot have him, remember that you are wishing for figs in winter. For as winter is to a fig, so is every accident in the universe to those things with which it interferes. In the next place, whatever objects give you pleasure, call before yourself the opposite images. What harm is there, while you kiss your child, in saying softly, "Tomorrow you may die"; and so to your friend, "Tomorrow either you or I may go away, and we may see each other no more."

"But these sayings are ominous."

And so are some incantations; but, because they are useful, I do not mind it; only let them be useful. But do you call anything ominous except what implies some ill? Cowardice is ominous; baseness is ominous; lamentation, grief, shamelessness. These are words of bad omen; and yet we ought not to shrink from using them, as a guard against the things they mean. But do you tell me that a word is

ominous which is significant of anything natural? Say, too, that it is ominous for ears of corn to be reaped; for this signifies the destruction of the corn; but not of the world. Say, too, that the fall of the leaf is ominous; and that confectionery should be produced from figs, and raisins from grapes. For all these are changes from a former state into another; not a destruction, but a certain appointed economy and administration. Such is absence, a slight change; such is death, a greater change; not from what now is nothing, but to what now is not.

"What, then, shall I be no more?"

True; but you will be something else, of which at present the world has no need; for even *you* were not produced when you pleased, but when the world had need of you. Hence a wise and good man, mindful who he is and whence he came, and by whom he was produced, is attentive only how he may fill his post regularly and dutifully before God.

For all other pleasures substitute the consciousness that you are obeying God, and performing not in word, but in deed, the duty of a wise and good man. How great a thing is it to be able to say to yourself: "What others are now solemnly arguing in the schools, and can state in paradoxes this I put in practice. Those qualities which are there discussed, disputed, celebrated, I have made my own."

Having these principles always at hand, and practising them by yourself, and making them ready for use, you will never want anyone to comfort and strengthen you. For shame does

not consist in having nothing to eat, but in not having wisdom enough to exempt you from fear and sorrow. But if you once acquire that exemption, will a tyrant, or his guards, or courtiers, be anything to you? Only do not make a parade over it, nor grow insolent about it. But show it by your actions; and though no one else should notice it, be content that you are well and blessed.

BOOK IV

1. OF FREEDOM

He is free who lives as he likes; who is not subject to compulsion, to restraint, or to violence; whose pursuits are unhindered, his desires unsuccessful, his aversions unincurred. Who, then, would wish to lead a wrong course of life? "No one." Who would live deceived, erring, unjust, dissolute, discontented, dejected? "No one." No wicked man, then, lives as he likes; therefore no such man is free. And who would live in sorrow, fear, envy, pity, with disappointed desires and unavailing aversions? "No one." Do we then find any of the wicked exempt from these evils? "Not one." Consequently, then, they are not free.

Do you think freedom to be something great and noble and valuable? "How should I not?" Is it possible, then, that he who acquires anything so great and valuable and noble should be of an abject spirit? "It is not." Whenever, then, you see anyone subject to another, and flattering him contrary to his own opinion, confidently say that he too is not free; and not only when he does this for a supper, but

even if it be for a government, nay, a consulship. Call those indeed little slaves who act thus for the sake of little things; and call the others as they deserve, great slaves. "Be this, too, agreed." Well; do you think freedom to be something independent and self-determined? "How can it be otherwise?"

What is it, then, that makes a man free and independent? For neither riches, nor consulship, nor the command of provinces, nor of kingdoms, can make him so; but something else must be found. What is it that keeps anyone from being hindered and restrained in penmanship, for instance? "The science of penmanship." Therefore in life, too, it must be the science of living. As you have heard it in general, then, consider it likewise in particulars. Is it possible for him to be unrestrained who desires any of those things that are within the power of others? "No." Can he avoid being hindered? "No." Therefore neither can he be free. Consider, then, whether we have nothing or everything in our own sole power,—or whether some things are in our own power and some in that of others.

Is there nothing independent, which is in your own power alone, and unalienable? See if you have anything of this sort. "I do not know." But, consider it thus: can anyone make you assent to a falsehood? "No one." In the matter of assent, then, you are unrestrained and unhindered. "Agreed." Well, and can anyone compel you to exert your aims towards what you do not like?" "He can. For when he threatens me with death, or fetters,

he thus compels me." If, then, you were to despise dying or being fettered, would you any longer regard him? "No." Is despising death, then, an action in your power, or is it not? "It is." Is it therefore in your power also to exert your aims towards anything, or is it not? "Agreed that it is. But in whose power is my avoiding anything?" This, too, is in your own. "What then if, when I am exerting myself to walk, anyone should restrain me?" What part of you can he restrain? Can he restrain your assent? "No, but my body." Ay, as he may a stone. "Be it so. But still I cease to walk." And who claimed that walking was one of the actions that cannot be restrained? For I only said that your exerting yourself towards it could not be restrained. But where there is need of body and its assistance, you have already heard that nothing is in your power. "Be this, too, agreed."

What is not in your own power, either to procure or to preserve when you will, *that* belongs to another. Keep off not only your hands from it, but even more than these, your desires. Otherwise you have given yourself up as a slave; you have put your neck under the yoke, if you admire any of the things which are not your own, but which are subject and mortal, to which of them soever you are attached. "Is not my hand my own?" It is a part of you, but it is by nature clay, liable to restraint, to compulsion; a slave to everything stronger than itself. And why do I say your hand? You ought to hold your whole body but

as a useful ass, with a packsaddle on, so long as may be, so long as it is allowed you. But if there should come a military conscription, and a soldier should lay hold on it, let it go. Do not resist, or murmur; otherwise you will be first beaten and lose the ass after all. And since you are thus to regard even the body itself, think what remains to do concerning things to be provided for the sake of the body. If that be an ass, the rest are but bridles, pack-saddles, shoes, oats, hay, for him. Let these go, too. Quit them yet more easily and expeditiously. And when you are thus prepared and trained to distinguish what belongs to others from your own, what is liable to restraint from what is not; to esteem the one your own property, but not the other; to keep your desire, to keep your aversion carefully regulated by this point; whom have you any longer to fear? "No one." For about what should you be afraid? About what is your own, in which consists the essence of good and evil? And who has any power over *this?* Who can take it away? Who can hinder you, any more than God can be hindered.

Study from morning till night, beginning with the least and frailest things, as with earthenware and glassware. Afterwards, proceed to a suit of clothes, a dog, a horse, an estate; thence to yourself, body, members, children, wife, brothers. Look everywhere around you, and be able to detach yourself from these things. Correct your principles. Permit nothing to cleave to you that is not your own; nothing to grow to you that may give you

agony when it is torn away. And say, when you are daily training yourself as you do here, not that you act the philosopher, which may be a presumptuous claim, but that you are asserting your freedom. For this is true freedom.

Come, then; let us recapitulate what has been granted. The man who is unrestrained, who has all things in his power as he wills, is free; but he who may be restrained, or compelled, or hindered, or thrown into any condition against his will, is a slave. "And who is unrestrained?" He who desires none of those things that belong to others. "And what are those things which belong to others?" Those which are not in our own power, either to have or not to have; or to have them thus or so. Body, therefore, belongs to another; its parts to another; property to another. If, then, you attach yourself to any of these as your own you will be punished, as he deserves who desires what belongs to others. This is the way that leads to freedom; this the only deliverance from slavery; to be able at length to say, from the bottom of one's soul: "Conduct me, Zeus, and thou, O destiny, wherever your decrees have fixed my lot."

Study these points, these principles, these discourses; contemplate these examples if you would be free, if you desire the thing in proportion to its value. And where is the wonder that you should purchase so good a thing at the price of others, so many, and so great? Some hang themselves, others break their necks, and some times even whole cities have

been destroyed for that which is reputed freedom; and will not you for the sake of the true and secure and inviolable freedom, repay God what he hath given when he demands it? Will you not study, not only, as Plato says, how to die, but how to be tortured and banished and scourged; and, in short, how to give up all that belongs to others? If not, you will be a slave among slaves, though you were ten thousand times a consul; and even though you should rise to the palace you will never be the less so. And you will feel that, though philosophers do, perhaps, talk contrary to common opinion, yet it is not contrary to reason. For you will find it true, in fact, that the things that are eagerly followed and admired are of no use to those who have gained them; while they who have not yet gained them imagine that, if they are acquired, every good will come along with them; and, then, when they are acquired, there is the same feverishness, the same agitation, the same nausea, and the same desire for what is absent. For freedom is not procured by a full enjoyment of what is desired, but by controlling the desire. And in order to know that this is true, take the same pains about these which you have taken about other things. Hold vigils to acquire a set of principles that will make you free. Instead of a rich old man pay your court to a philosopher. Be seen about his doors. You will not get any disgrace by being seen there. You will not return empty or unprofited if you go as you ought. However, try at least. The trial is not dishonorable.

3. WHAT THINGS ARE TO BE EXCHANGED FOR OTHERS

When you have lost anything external, have always at hand the consideration of what you have got instead of it; and if that be of more value, do not by any means call yourself a loser; whether it be a horse for an ass; an ox for a sheep; a good action for a piece of money; a due composure of mind for a dull jest; or modesty for indecent talk. By continually remembering this, you will preserve your character such as it ought to be. Otherwise, consider that you are spending your time in vain; and all that to which you are now applying your mind, you are about to spill and overturn. And there needs but little, merely a small deviation from reason, to destroy and overset all. A pilot does not need so much apparatus to overturn a ship as to save it; but if he exposes it a little too much to the wind, it is lost; even if he should not do it by design, but only for a moment be thinking of something else, it is lost. Such is the case here, too. If you do but nod a little, all that you have hitherto accomplished is gone. Take heed, then, to the appearances of things. Keep yourself watchful over them. It is no inconsiderable matter that you have to guard; but modesty, fidelity, constancy, docility, innocence, fearlessness, serenity; in short, freedom. For what will you sell these? Consider what the purchase is worth.

5. CONCERNING THE QUARRELSOME AND FEROCIOUS

A wise and good person neither quarrels with anyone himself, nor, as far as possible, suffers another to do so. (For, what is it to quarrel about a person's lack of wisdom, lack of manners, or anything in him that does not suit you? You quarrel with the ruling faculty of someone else, with something that is not yours and is beyond your control.)

What room is there then for quarrelling, to a person thus disposed? For does he wonder at anything that happens? Does it appear strange to him? Does he not prepare for worse and more grievous injuries from bad people than actually happen to him? Does he not reckon it so much gained if they come short of the last extremities? Such a one has reviled you. You are much obliged to him that he has not struck you. But he has struck you too. You are much obliged to him that he has not wounded you too. But he has wounded you too. You are much obliged to him that he has not killed you. For when did he ever learn, or from whom, that he is gentle, that he is a social animal; that the very injury itself is a great mischief to him who inflicts it? As, then, he has not learned those things, nor believes them, why should he not follow what appears to be for his interest? Your neighbor has thrown stones. What then? Is it any fault of yours? But your goods are broken. What then? Are you a piece of furniture? No; but your essence consists in the faculty of will.

What behavior then is assigned to you in return? If you consider yourself a wolf,—then, to bite again, to throw more stones. But if you ask the question as a man, then examine your treasure; see what faculties you have brought into the world with you. Are they fitted for ferocity? For revenge? When is a horse miserable? When he is deprived of his natural faculties. Not when he cannot crow, but when he cannot run. And a dog? Not when he cannot fly, but when he cannot hunt. Is not a man, then, also unhappy in the same manner? Not he who cannot strangle lions or perform athletic feats (for he has received no faculties for this purpose from nature); but who has lost his rectitude of mind, his fidelity. This is he who ought to receive public condolence for the misfortunes into which he is fallen; not, by Heaven, either he who has the misfortune to be born or to die; but he whom it has befallen while he lives to lose what is properly his own. Not his paternal possessions, his paltry estate or his house, his lodging or his slaves, for none of these are a man's own; but all these belong to others, are servile, dependent, and very variously assigned by the disposers of them. But his personal qualifications as a man, the impressions which he brought into the world stamped upon his mind; such as we look for in money, accepting or rejecting it accordingly.

7. OF FEARLESSNESS

What makes a tyrant formidable? His guards, say you, and their swords; they who protect his bedchamber; and they who keep out intruders. Why, then, if you bring a child

to him amidst these guards, is it not afraid? Is it because the child does not know what they mean? Suppose, then, that anyone knows what is meant by guards, and that they are armed with swords; and for that very reason comes in the tyrant's way, being desirous, on account of some misfortune, to die, and seeking to die easily by the hand of another. Does such a man fear the guards? No; for he desires the very thing that renders them formidable. Well, then, if anyone being without an absolute desire to live or die, but indifferent to it, comes in the way of a tyrant, what prevents his approaching him without fear? Nothing. If, then, another should think concerning his estate, or wife, or children, as this man thinks concerning his body; and, in short, from some madness or folly should be of such a disposition as not to care whether he has them or not; but just as children, playing with shells, are busied with the play, but not with the shells, so he should pay no regard to these affairs, except to carry on the play with them, what tyrant, what guards or swords are any longer formidable to such a man?

Show me the swords of the guards. "See how long and sharp they are." What, then, can these great and sharp swords do? "They kill." And what can a fever do? "Nothing else." And a falling tile? "Nothing else." Do you then wish me to be bewildered by all these things, and to worship them, and to go about as a slave to them all? Heaven forbid! But having once learned that everything that is born must likewise die, (that the world may

not be at a stand, nor the course of it hindered,) I no longer see any difference whether this be effected by a fever, a tile, or a soldier; but if any comparison is to be made, I know that the soldier will effect it with less pain and more speedily. Since then I neither fear any of those things which he can inflict upon me, nor covet anything which he can bestow, why do I stand any longer in awe of a tyrant? Why am I amazed at him? Why do I fear his guards?

But to keep up the play [that is, of life, as an actor on the stage of life] I go to him and serve him, so long as he commands nothing unreasonable or improper. (It makes no difference, though, if he threatens me.) These things are frightful to children and fools. But if anyone, who has once entered into the school of a philosopher, knows not what he himself is, then he deserves to be frightened, and to flatter the last object of flattery; if he has not yet learnt that he is neither flesh, nor bones, nor nerves, but is that which makes use of these, and regulates and comprehends the phenomena of existence.

8. CONCERNING SUCH AS HASTILY ASSUME THE PHILOSOPHIC DRESS

Never commend or censure anyone for common actions, nor attribute to them either skilfulness or unskilfulness; and thus you will at once be free both from rashness and ill-nature. Till you know from what principle anyone acts, neither commend nor censure the action.

If we hear anyone sing badly, we do not say,

"Observe how musicians sing," but rather, "This fellow is no musician." It is with regard to philosophy alone that people are thus affected. When they see anyone acting inconsistently with the profession of a philosopher, they do not take away his title; but assuming that he is a philosopher, and then reasoning from his improper behavior, they infer that philosophy is of no use.

Why, then, will you not first see, whether when acting improperly he fulfils his profession, ere you proceed to blame the study? Whereás now, when acting soberly yourself, you say, in regard to whatever he appears to do amiss, "Observe the philosopher!" As if it were proper to call a person who does such things a philosopher. And, indeed, even those called philosophers enter upon their profession by commonplace beginnings. As soon as they have put on the cloak and let their beards grow, they cry, "I am a philosopher." Yet no one says, "I am a musician," merely because he has bought a fiddle and fiddlestick: nor, "I am a smith," because he is dressed in the cap and apron. But they take their name from their art, not from their garb.

But now they who have only such an inclination to philosophy as weak stomachs have to some kinds of food, of which they will presently grow sick, expect to hasten to the scepter, to the kingdom. They let their hair grow, assume the cloak, bare the shoulder, wrangle with all they meet; and if they see any one in a thick, warm coat, must needs wrangle with him. First harden yourself against all

weather, man. Consider your inclination; whether it be not that of a weak stomach, or of a longing woman. First study to conceal what you are; philosophize a little while by yourself. Fruit is produced thus. The seed must first be buried in the ground, lie hid there some time, and grow up by degrees, that it may come to perfection. But if it produces the ear before the stalk has its proper joints, it is imperfect. Now *you* are a poor plant of this kind. You have blossomed too soon: the winter will kill you. Beware you too, O man. You have shot out luxuriantly; you have sprung forth towards a trifling fame, before thy proper season. You seem to be somebody, as a fool may among fools. You will be taken by the frost; or rather, you are already frozen downward at the root; you still blossom indeed a little at the top, and therefore you think you are still alive and flourishing.

Let us, at least, ripen naturally. Why do you lay us open? Why do you force us? We cannot yet bear the air. Suffer the root to grow; then the first, then the second, then the third joint of the stalk to spring from it; and thus nature will force out the fruit, whether I will or not. For who that is charged with such principles, but must perceive, too, his own powers, and strive to put them in practice. Not even a bull is ignorant of his own powers, when any wild beast approaches the herd, nor waits he for anyone to encourage him; nor does a dog when he spies any game. And if I have the powers of a good man, shall I wait for you to qualify me for my own prop-

er actions? But believe me, I have them not quite yet. Why, then, would you wish me to be withered before my time, as you are?

11. OF PURITY

Some doubt whether the love of society be comprehended in the nature of man; and yet these very persons do not seem to me to doubt but that purity is by all means comprehended in it; and that by this, if by anything, it is distinguished from brute animals. When, therefore, we see any animal cleaning itself, we are apt to cry with wonder that it is like a human creature. On the contrary, if an animal is censured, we are presently apt to say, by way of excuse, that it is not a human creature. Such excellence do we suppose to be in man, which we first received from the gods. For as they are by nature pure and uncorrupt, in proportion as men approach to them by reason, they are tenacious of purity and incorruption. But since it is impracticable that their essence, composed of such materials, should be absolutely pure, it is the office of reason to endeavor to render it as pure as possible.

The first and highest purity or impurity, then, is that which is formed in the soul. But you will not find the impurity of the soul and body to be alike. For what stain can you find in the soul, unless it be something which renders it impure in its operations? Now the operations of the soul are its pursuits and avoidances, its desires, aversions, preparations, intentions, assents. What, then, is that which

renders it defiled and impure in these operations? Nothing else than its perverse judgments. So that the impurity of the soul consists in wicked principles, and its purification in forming right principles; and that is pure which has right principles, for that alone is unmixed and undefiled in its operations.

Now we should, as far as possible, endeavor after something like this in the body, too. It is impossible but that in such a composition as man, there must be a discharge of superfluous phlegm. For this reason, Nature has made hands, and the nostrils themselves as channels to let out the moisture; nor can this be neglected with propriety. (And so on, with the toilet of the rest of the body. You owe a clean body not only to yourself, but to the rest of society, that you may associate with them as a man, not as a brute.)

12. OF TAKING PAINS

When you cease to take pains for a little while, do not fancy you may recommence whenever you please, but remember this: that by means of a fault today, your affairs must necessarily be in a worse condition for the future. The first and worst evil is that there arises a habit of neglect; and then a habit of postponing effort, and constantly procrastinating as to one's successes and good behavior and orderly thought and action. Now if procrastination as to anything is advantageous, it must be still more advantageous to omit it altogether; but if it be not advantageous, why do you not take pains all the time? For there is no part of life exempted, about which pains are not needed.

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